

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES PRACTICE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

School health services strengthen and facilitate the educational process by improving and protecting the health status of students and school personnel.

AUTHORIZATION/LEGAL REFERENCE:

- 16 V.S.A. Chapter 3 § 165 - Standards of quality for public schools
- 16 V.S.A. Chapter 31 § 1422 - Vision and hearing tests
- 18 V.S.A. Chapter 21 § 1001- Reporting communicable diseases
- 18 V.S.A. Chapter 21 § 1121 - Immunizations required prior to attending school
- 33 V.S.A. Chapter 49 - Child welfare services
- Vermont School Quality Standards, Rules 2120.8.1.3.3
- Vermont State Board of Nursing Position Statement on continuing education for nurses
- Vermont State Board of Nursing Position Statement on Nurses functioning in positions other than for which they are licensed

REQUIRED SCHOOL NURSE/ASSOCIATE SCHOOL NURSE ROLES:

1. Perform vision and hearing screenings as mandated by laws.
2. Evaluate immunization records for meeting school attendance requirements and facilitate the compliance of students with state immunization requirements.
3. Function as a member of the child abuse/neglect reporting team.
4. Report communicable diseases as required.
5. Oversee and practice health services in accordance with state law and school policy and protocols.
6. Administer medication according to the standards of practice (See Medication Section).
7. Maintain up-to-date nursing license, school nurse/associated school nurse licensure from the Department of Education.

SUGGESTED SCHOOL NURSE ROLES:

1. Act as a case manager for 504 students with health needs.
 2. Act as coordinator/chair of the coordinated school health team.
 3. Serve as a resource to teachers and administrators in health education and as a member of the health curriculum committee
 4. Act as a resource person in promoting health careers.
 5. Act as coordinator when collaborating with other school personnel and community members to ensure a safe and healthy school environment and programs for staff and students.
 6. Act as coordinator of the child abuse/neglect reporting team.
 7. Act as coordinator of the school crisis response team.
 8. Coordinate the development of school policies related to health concerns.
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SUGGESTED SCHOOL NURSE/ASSOCIATE SCHOOL NURSE ROLES:

1. Collaborate with administration in development of a clear job description.
2. Provide health services for illness and injuries.
3. Support the development of a safe and healthy school in collaboration with the school community (i.e. OSHA regulations, safe playground, coordinated school health, drugs and alcohol, etc.).
4. Prepare, implement and evaluate individual student health care plans as needed.
5. Provide protocols, training and supervision for delegated health procedures such as ventilators, gastrostomy feedings, tracheotomy care, administration of medication, and catheterization.
6. Educate the school community about chronic and communicable diseases as needed.
7. Act as liaison between school community, local health care providers and local health agencies.
8. Participate on the school crisis response team.
9. Provide guidelines for development of policies and protocols pertaining to health service delivery.
10. Engage in evaluation of health services in collaboration with administration and address needs and methods for making improvements.
11. Collaborate in promotion of staff wellness activities.
12. Pursue professional development opportunities.
13. Participate as a member of school teams to improve student health outcomes.
14. Assess, plan for, implement and evaluate the health needs of students and the school environment.
15. Collect updated emergency and health information on students annually and maintain health records.
16. Provide health education information to students and staff.

RESOURCES:

- National Association of School Nurses - <http://www.nasn.org/>
- Safe and Healthy Schools Coordinated School Health Workgroup - http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_coordhealth.html
- School Liaisons
- Vermont Department of Health - <http://www.healthyvermonters.info/>
- Vermont State Board of Nursing - <http://vtprofessionals.org/opr1/nurses/>
- Vermont State School Nurses' Association (VSSNA) - <http://www.vssna.org/>

SAMPLE POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FORMS:

- Guidelines for Establishing Safe School Nurse-to-Student Population Ratios
 - Sample Planning Calendar for the Health Services Office
 - School Nurse Job Description
 - *Role of the School Nurse*. NASN, 2002
 - *The Role of the School Nurse in providing School Health Services*. American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001
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Guidelines For Establishing Safe School Nurse to Student Population Ratios

These guidelines apply to student populations in one building. Students with special needs often require a great deal of the school nurse's time to assess, plan, implement and evaluate their care. Student population numbers listed below need to reflect this by accommodating for the intensity level of the special needs students in a given population. Students who fit into an "at risk" category (see definition on following page) need to be counted as 3 students. Students who are moderately physically or emotionally challenged should be counted as 10 students (KSNO, 1994). Students with severe/complicated medical, physical, or mental challenges should be counted as 20.

Components of School Nursing	School Nurse to Student Ratio One Full Time Equivalent / Number of Students (general population - without many special needs students)			
	1 FTE / 350 and below Comprehensive School Health Services	1 FTE / 500 Students Core School Health Services	1 FTE / 750 Students Minimum School Health Services	1 FTE / 800 and above Inadequate School Health Services
1. First Aid & Emergency Care	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Child Abuse & Neglect	Yes	Yes	Yes - follow up limited	Limited
3. Communicable Disease Control	Yes	Yes	Limited	Very Limited
4. Health Screening	Yes - with follow up	Yes - follow up limited	Limited	Very Limited
5. Health Counseling	Yes	Yes	Limited	Very Limited
6. Health Appraisal	Yes	Yes	Limited	Very Limited to None
7. Medication Administration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8. Consultation, Planning and Implementation of Care for Special Needs Students	Yes	Limited	Very Limited	Very Limited to None
9. Substance Abuse Intervention	Yes	Yes	Limited	Very Limited
10. Health Education Resource/Provider	Yes - Provider - classroom participation possible	Yes - Resource - limited classroom participation	Limited - Resource only	Very Limited
11. School Personnel Health Services	Yes	Limited	Very Limited	Very Limited to None
12. Safety School Environment	Yes	Limited	Very Limited	Very Limited to None

Additional factors to consider when establishing safe school nurse to student population ratios are:

1. *The number of buildings the nurse covers* - The travel time and the fact that the nurse is not always present to carry out such things as first aid and medication administration limits the coverage that she/he can provide. Ratios need to be lower in these situations. For example, the minimum school health services ratio of 1/750 needs to be lowered to 1/500 students in a maximum of five buildings, each of which is accessible within thirty minutes (Vermont Standards of Practices: School Health Services, 1995).
2. *The staffing patterns - the use of unlicensed and licensed personnel* such as secretaries and licensed practical nurses to cover the health office in the nurse's absence or to augment health services. The delegation of nursing tasks to these persons requires training and monitoring by the school nurse. Adequate time must be available for these functions.
3. *The amount of time and responsibility the nurse takes for health education.* Coordination, planning and lesson preparation can require large amounts of time away from other school nursing tasks. The more the nurse is involved with health education the lower the ratios must be to allow for proper follow through in the area of health services.

"At risk" students may be characterized by any one or more of the following indicators:

1. A high rate of absenteeism from school - ten days or more;
2. Failure to achieve grade level standards;
3. Failure in two or more subjects or courses of study;
4. Behind in credits to graduate;
5. Retention at grade level one or more times;
5. Below grade level for students of the same age;
7. Pregnancy or parenthood or both;
8. Repeated commission of disciplinary infraction;
9. Member of a house hold that is at or below the poverty level using criteria for free and reduced lunch program;
10. Limited English proficiency;
11. Identified victim of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and/or neglect;
12. Health or substance abuse problems;
13. Attempted suicide;
14. Identified as medically fragile or has special health needs;
15. Identified with an I.E.P. for Special Education, as 504, as gifted or with speech problems.

(KNSO, 1994)

Adopted 1/14/98 by The School Nurse Advisory Board to the Vermont Department of Education and the Vermont State School Nurse's Association
 Adopted 12/16/98 by Vermont's Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules as part of the School Quality Standards
 Adopted 1/99 by the Vermont Legislature

Guidelines For Establishing Safe School Nurse to Student Population Ratios

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SAMPLE PLANNING CALENDAR FOR THE HEALTH SERVICES OFFICE

AUGUST

- SEND MEDICATION REMINDER NOTICES - requesting signed medication forms prior to first day of school.
- CALL PARENTS of children with health needs, IHP, medications as needed.
- BEGINNING OF YEAR LETTERS:
 - ☐ Welcome
 - ☐ Annual Questionnaire
- IMMUNIZATIONS/BIRTH CERTIFICATES:
 - ☐ List of students not yet in compliance
- UPDATE LISTS/STUDENT RECORDS:
 - ☐ Alphabetical list (whole school)
 - ☐ Class lists
 - ☐ Physical/dental insurance class lists
- LIST OF AREA DOCTORS AND DENTISTS for reference during the year.
- STAFF HANDOUTS:
 - ☐ Emergency information cards
 - ☐ Health room passes
 - ☐ First aid baggies (gloves, band aids, tooth chests)
- DEVELOP AND SEND NUT LETTERS TO CLASSROOMS
- MAKE NUT/SAFE ALLERGY AWARE SIGNS for Lunchroom tables
 - ☐ Classroom doors
- PTO SIGN-UP FOR HEALTH SCREENING

SEPTEMBER

- REVIEW RECORDS/GATHER DATA REGARDING Students with asthma and/or other allergies
 - ☐ Students with epi-pens
 - ☐ Students without health insurance
 - ☐ Forbidden Access / Court Orders
 - ☐ Students without medical/dental homes
 - ☐ Special services requested
 - MEET WITH INDIVIDUAL FACULTY/STAFF REGARDING HEALTH NEEDS OF STUDENTS, on a need to know basis [This can be completed in August as well].
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- DEVELOP INDIVIDUAL HEALTH CARE PLANS/EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS for students with special health care needs:
 - ☐ Take photo of kids for protocols, master list, and food personnel.
 - ☐ Have protocol signed by parent, teacher, principal, and nurse.
 - ☐ Make field trip mini protocols and copy emergency cards for field trips.
- INSERVICE TRAINING for health office staff or delegates who will perform health services, including medication administration, health office protocols. [This can be completed in August as well].

Train teachers, support staff and paraprofessionals for allergy reaction symptoms, epi pen use, seizures and asthma symptoms. Include as appropriate:

- ☐ Recess/lunchroom staff
 - ☐ Food service personnel
 - ☐ Bus drivers
 - ☐ Specials teachers
 - ☐ Office staff
- IMMUNIZATIONS, BIRTH CERTIFICATES & OTHER BEGINNING OF THE YEAR PAPERWORK: Check for completeness on each child
 - ☐ Send reminder notice during first week of school
 - ☐ Notify principal of any student not in compliance with immunizations
 - SEND HOME ASTHMA UPDATE FORM
 - COLLECT MEDICATIONS/MD ORDERS/PARENT SIGNED MEDICATION FORMS
 - SCHEDULE SCREENING for Vision, Hearing, as indicated in the standards of practice.
 - ☐ Schedule rooms for screening
 - ☐ Class lists
 - ☐ Solidify volunteers
 - ☐ Email/letter to teachers indicating schedule
 - SCHEDULE 504 MEETINGS
 - BLOOD BORNE PATHOGENS TRAINING FOR STAFF
 - INPUT HEALTH ALERTS into School Master.
 - INPUT IMMUNIZATIONS into School Master.
 - UPDATE SUB NOTEBOOK.

OCTOBER

- SCREENING:
 - ☐ Begin/continue to screen.
 - ☐ Enter screening data on charts
 - ☐ Referrals to parents - written and/or verbal
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- IMMUNIZATION FOLLOW -UP
 - ☐ Contact families of students not in compliance, give immunization clinic data, medical home information, etc (Form #2, notice p.18, immunization law)
 - ☐ Review list of immunization reports
 - ☐ Give families November deadline for immunization information, MD appt, exclusion, etc. as appropriate

NOVEMBER

- IMMUNIZATIONS:
 - ☐ Send letter from principal the first week of November
 - ☐ Deadline for receiving immunization information is one week before Thanksgiving.
- PREPARE VERMONT DEPT. OF HEALTH IMMUNIZATION REPORT (due on December 1st)

DECEMBER

- IMMUNIZATIONS
 - ☐ Notify principal of any student not in compliance
 - ☐ Send exclusion letter to family signed by principal and SN (Notice p. 19, immunization law)
 - ☐ Exclusion for non-compliance to start January 1st
 - ☐ Notify Superintendent of students excluded for non-compliance

* DOCUMENT ALL CONTACT WITH FAMILIES REGARDING
IMMUNIZATIONS IN SCHOOL MASTER**

JANUARY

- Vision and Hearing completed and follow-up from referrals
- SEND REMINDER NOTICES TO PARENTS

MAY

- FINISH SCREENING REPORT TO THE DEPT. OF EDUCATION: blood pressure, hearing, vision, etc. Submit by June 1st.
- Have all immunizations in School Master, including incoming Kindergarten.
- INPUT INCOMING K HEALTH INFORMATION - on lists and health alerts in School Master

JUNE

- SUPPLY INVENTORY/ORDER SUPPLIES
 - WRITE BEGINNING OF SCHOOL LETTERS
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- FILE MEDICATION SHEETS, ACCIDENT REPORTS, LOG BOOK
- ENTER STATISTICAL DATA FOR THE YEAR AND PRINT
- PRINT IMMUNIZATIONS ON CHILDREN WHO ARE MOVING

CONTINUOUS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:

Keep records up to date, daily log book up to date, School Master input of immunizations and daily log. Fill out accident reports as necessary, head lice control, data collection for final reports. Health room maintenance, attendance at staff meetings and parent, teacher meetings. Teacher follow-up, monthly bulletin boards, monthly newsletters, community liaison work and student/parent communication.

Sample Job Description

Title: School Nurse or Associate School Nurse

Job Responsibilities: The school nurse strengthens and facilitates the educational process by modifying or removing health related barriers to learning for individual students and by promoting an optimal level of wellness for students and staff. The nurse assumes responsibility and accountability for the assessment of the health needs of a student, a plan of action, implementation, and evaluation of the plan. The school nurse is also responsible for the delegation of nursing tasks to a designated person(s) in the school setting. This practice is done in accordance with the accepted standards of nursing as defined by the profession. The school nurse will serve as the direct link between physicians, families and community agencies to assure access and continuity of health care for the students. The school nurse will provide care, relevant instruction, counseling, and guidance to students. The school nurse practices in accordance with the current standards and functions as defined by the Vermont Practice Act and the Standards of Practice: School Health Services.

Time: The school nurse will work in accordance with the number of days established annually by the school board in the school calendar.

Requirements:

School Nurse:

1. Has earned a baccalaureate or master's degree from an accredited nursing program.
2. Has a current valid license to practice professional nursing issued by the Vermont Board of Nursing.
3. Has four years of clinical nursing experience beyond nursing education.
4. Holds a valid education license with an endorsement as a school nurse.
5. Holds a current certificate in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.
6. Has completed an educational orientation program provided through the Department of Education and based on the requirements for delivery of health services as defined in the *Vermont School Quality Standards* and the Vermont manual *Standards of Practice: School Health Services*.
7. Has successfully completed the Praxis I exam or met developed criteria from Graduate Record Exam, Scholastic Aptitude Test or the American College Test as outlined by the Department of Education.
8. Will renew Registered Nurse license every two years.
9. Will renew School Nurse License every seven years in collaboration with the local school district Standards Board.
10. Will hold a dual certification in Health Education if contracted to provide a daily health education assignment.

Associate School Nurse:

1. Has earned an Associate's Degree/Diploma from an accredited nursing program.
 2. Has a valid license as a Registered Nurse (RN) in the state of Vermont.
 3. Has four years of clinical nursing experience that includes community health and pediatric nursing.
 4. Holds a current certificate in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.
 5. Has completed an approved educational orientation program provided through the Department of Education and based on the requirements for delivery of health services
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as defined in the Vermont *School Quality Standards* and the Vermont manual titled *Standards of Practice: School Health Services*.

6. Has successfully completed the Praxis I exam or met developed criteria from Graduate Record Exam, Scholastic Aptitude Test or the American College Test as outlined by the Department of Education
7. Will renew Registered Nurse license every two years
8. Will renew Associate School Nurse license every seven years with the local school district Standard's Board

Work Performed:

Provider of Student Health Care

1. Provides *mandated screening programs.
2. Completes Immunization audit and reports
3. Determines Student Access to Medical and Dental Providers
4. Determines health care needs of the students within the school and develops a health care plan.
5. Interprets the health and developmental assessments to parents, teachers, administrators, and other appropriate professionals.
6. Provides communicable disease control procedures and advises administration and parents regarding school exclusion and re-admittance, and may arrange transportation when appropriate.
7. Provides appropriate assessment and care for the students with special health care needs.

Planner and Coordinator of Student Health Care

1. Complies and maintains appropriate statistical information:

School:

Immunization
Student Health Records
Daily log
Medication log
Accident report
Annual report

State:

Immunization audits
Hearing and vision data

2. Provide and document training of delegated procedures
3. Assists in formulating health policies
4. Participates with administration in the process of evaluation and goal setting.
5. Maintains professional competencies through in service educational activities and/or self selected professional growth activities.
6. Promoter of a healthful school environment. Monitors, reports and recommends changes for safety hazards and sanitary conditions in the school environment.

Resources for staff and community

1. Use health services as a means of health teaching.
 2. Provide in service training for health related issues as indicated.
 3. Serve as a faculty member in the total school program
 4. Provide staff and parents information and counseling concerning individual students' health problems, including the participation in staffing as needed.
 5. Provide staff and parents with information on current health practices and problems,
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including identifying and dealing with health problems, locating resources and maintenance of information displays, bulletin boards, etc.

6. Participate on teams

Health Educator

1. Act as a resource person and consultant for health education in the classroom setting.

Other

Evaluation and Supervision: School Nurse receives supervision and evaluations from building or district administrators using the same schedule and process as other teaching staff. The school nurse should be evaluated on both school nurse practice as determined by his/her job description and personal development plan.



National Association of School Nurses

ISSUE BRIEF

School Health Nursing Services Role in Health Care

Role of the School Nurse

INTRODUCTION

The practice of school nursing began in the United States on October 1, 1902 when the initial role of the school nurse was to reduce absenteeism by intervening with students and families regarding health care needs related to communicable diseases. While the nurse's role has expanded greatly from its original focus, the essence of the practice remains the same. The school nurse supports student success by providing health care assessment, intervention, and follow-up for all children within the school setting.

BACKGROUND

In 1999, the National Association of School Nurses Board of Directors defined school nursing as:

A specialized practice of professional nursing that advances the well-being, academic success, and life-long achievement of students. To that end, school nurses facilitate positive student responses to normal development; promote health and safety; intervene with actual and potential health problems; provide case management services; and actively collaborate with others to build student and family capacity for adaptation, self management, self advocacy, and learning.

Inherent in this definition is the framework that school nurses engage in professional nursing practice, use the nursing process for decision-making, document the care they provide, and assure confidentiality. Professional nurses address the physical, mental, emotional, and social health of their clients. In addition, professional school nurses have as the ultimate outcome of their practice, the support of student success in the learning process. In this context the school nurse provides services to the entire school population, which may include infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers, children with special needs, traditional school populations, and, to a limited degree, adults within the school community.

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL NURSE

Seven roles of the school nurse have evolved from this definition.

The school nurse provides direct health care to students and staff.

The school nurse provides care to students and staff who have been injured or who present with acute illnesses. Care may involve treatment of health problems within the scope of nursing practice, communication with parents for treatment, and referral to other providers. The school nurse uses the nursing process to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate care for students with chronic health conditions. This care should begin with the development of a nursing care plan (also known as an individualized health care plan) that should include an emergency action plan. The school nurse is responsible for medication administration and the performance of health care procedures that are within the scope of nursing practice and are ordered by an appropriately licensed health care provider. The school nurse also assists faculty and staff in monitoring chronic health conditions. As the scope of nursing practice expands to utilize the increasingly complex technology needed to provide up-to-date care for clients, the school nurse's body of knowledge grows through personal professional development.

The school nurse provides leadership for the provision of health services.

In addition to providing health services directly, the school nurse must take into account the nature of the school environment, including available resources. As the health care expert within the school, the school nurse assesses the overall system of care and develops a plan for assuring that health needs are met. This leadership role includes developing a plan for responding to emergencies and disasters and training staff to respond appropriately. It also involves the appropriate delegation of care within applicable laws. Delegation to others involves initial assessment, training, competency validation, supervision, and evaluation by the school nurse.

The school nurse provides screening and referral for health conditions.

In order to address potential health problems that are barriers to learning or symptoms of underlying medical conditions, the school nurse often engages in screening activities. Screening activities may include vision, hearing, postural, body mass index, or other screening. Determination of which screenings should be performed is based on several factors, including legal obligations, the validity of the screening test, the cost-effectiveness of the screening program, and the availability of resources to assure referral and follow-up.

The school nurse promotes a healthy school environment.

The school nurse provides for the physical and emotional safety of the school community. The school nurse monitors immunizations, assures appropriate exclusion from and re-entry into school, and reports communicable diseases as required by law. The school nurse provides leadership to the school in implementing precautions for blood borne pathogens and other infectious diseases. The school nurse also assesses the physical environment of the school and takes actions to improve health and safety.

Such activities may include an assessment of the playground, indoor air quality evaluation, or a review of patterns of illness or injury to determine a source of concern. Additionally, the school nurse addresses the emotional environment of the school to decrease conditions that may lead to bullying and violence and/or an environment not conducive to optimal mental health and learning.

The school nurse promotes health.

The school nurse provides health education by providing health information directly to individual students, groups of students, or classes or by providing guidance about the health education curriculum, encouraging comprehensive, sequential, and age appropriate information. They may also provide programs to staff, families, and the community on health topics. Other health promotion activities may include health fairs for students, families, or staff, consultation with other school staff such as food service personnel or physical education teachers regarding healthy lifestyles, and staff wellness programs. The school nurse is a member of the coordinated school health team that promotes the health and well-being of school members through collaborative efforts.

The school nurse serves in a leadership role for health policies and programs.

As the health care expert within the school system, the school nurse takes a leadership role in the development and evaluation of school health policies. The school nurse participates in and provides leadership to coordinated school health programs, crises/disaster management teams, and school health advisory councils. The school nurse promotes nursing as a career by discussions with students as appropriate, role modeling, and serving as a preceptor for student nurses or as a mentor for others beginning school nursing practice. Additionally, the school nurse participates in measuring outcomes or research, as appropriate, to advance the profession and advocates for programs and policies that positively affect the health of students or impact the profession of school nursing.

The school nurse serves as a liaison between school personnel, family, community, and health care providers.

The school nurse participates as the health expert on Individualized Education Plan and 504 teams and on student and family assistance teams. As case manager, the nurse communicates with the family through telephone calls, assures them with written communication and home visits as needed, and serves as a representative of the school community. The school nurse also communicates with community health providers and community health care agencies while ensuring appropriate confidentiality, develops community partnerships, and serves on community coalitions to promote the health of the community.

The school nurse may take on additional roles to meet the needs of the school community.

CONCLUSION

Healthy children are successful learners. The school nurse has a multi-faceted role within the school setting, one that supports the physical, mental, emotional, and social health of students and their success in the learning process.

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2002

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

Committee on School Health

The Role of the School Nurse in Providing School Health Services

ABSTRACT. The school nurse has a crucial role in the provision of school health services. This statement describes the school nurse as a member of the school health services team and its relation to children with special health care needs. Recommendations for the professional preparation and education of school nurses also are provided.

ABBREVIATION. AAP, American Academy of Pediatrics.

SCHOOL NURSE ACTIVITIES

Changes in society, the provision of health care, education, and the family have increased the need and demand for school health services. New paradigms are evolving for school health services as school systems develop comprehensive school health programs to address the diverse and complex health problems of today's students.¹ In addition to health issues, schools must cope with problems caused by immigration, homelessness, divorce, remarriage, poverty, substance abuse, and violence.²

The school nurse has a central management role in the implementation of the school health services program for all children and youth in the school. Ideally, the school nurse collaborates with primary care physicians, specialists, and local public health and social service agencies to ensure a full spectrum of effective and quality services that sustain children, youth, and their families. All school health services are delivered in the overall context of the child, the family, and the child's overall health plan.

The goals of a school health program that relate directly to the health service component as outlined in the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) manual *School Health: Policy and Practice*³ are to:

- ensure access to primary health care (a medical home);
- provide a system for dealing with crisis medical situations;
- provide mandated screening and immunization monitoring; and
- provide a process for identification and resolution of students' health care needs that affect educational achievement.

These goals are a major component of the larger school health program and focus on prevention and

early intervention. The school nurse has a critical role within this school health program and provides acute, chronic, episodic, and emergency health care. In addition, the school nurse provides health education and health counseling and advocates for students with disabilities. School nurses are well positioned to take the lead for the school system in partnering with community physicians, community organizations, and Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Program staff to assist families and students to enroll in the state health insurance programs and find a medical home for each student.

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES TEAM

The school nurse functions as a member and often the coordinator of the school health services team. The team may include a school physician, licensed practical nurses, health aides and clerical staff, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and substance abuse counselors. A pediatrician often fills the school physician role because he or she is knowledgeable about general pediatrics, school health, and adolescent health. In some schools, a pediatric family nurse practitioner functions as the school nurse and may provide additional services. If unlicensed assistive personnel are part of the school health services team, their performance of skilled nursing procedures must be supervised by the school nurse in accordance with state laws.

Some schools may have a school-based health center in or adjacent to the school, which may provide primary care and psychosocial services. The school nurse coordinates the activities of the school health services team with the child's primary care physician and/or with the school-based health center to provide continuity of care and prevent duplication of services.

THE SCHOOL NURSE AND CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS

The school nurse has a unique role in the provision of school health services for children with special health needs, including children with chronic illnesses and disabilities of various degrees of severity. These children are included in the regular school classroom setting as authorized by federal and state laws. As a leader of the school health team, the school nurse must assess the student's health status, identify health problems that may create a barrier to educational progress, and develop a health care plan for management of the problems in the school setting. The school nurse ensures that the student's

The recommendations in this statement do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment or serve as a standard of medical care. Variations, taking into account individual circumstances, may be appropriate.
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individual health care plan is part of the individual education plan or other written plan⁴ and that both plans are developed and implemented with full team participation, with parents and the child enlisted as partners. The school nurse's participation in the educational plan development heightens the potential for achieving the goals of the health care plan, which are to maximize the student's educational experience and to provide adequate preparation for responses to urgent situations. The school nurse develops this plan with the student, parents or guardians, and the child's primary care physician. Dialogue with subspecialists, community agency staff, and case managers can add important information. The school nurse must provide safe and effective direct services or facilitate the performance of special health care procedures, such as tracheostomy suctioning, bladder catheterization, ostomy care, nasogastric feedings, maintenance of orthopedic devices, and ventilator care, for all students who need them.

The school nurse should collect important information, such as special needs, modifications to routine medical procedures, allowance to administer stock over-the-counter medications in school (if offered), medical home, health insurance, emergency measures, and parent permission, to interact with the student's health care providers. The Emergency Information Form from the AAP and American College of Emergency Physicians, for example, could be used as a template for formulation of the individual medical plan.⁵

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION FOR SCHOOL NURSES

The AAP supports the goal of professional preparation for all school nurses. The National Association of School Nurses has determined that the minimum qualifications for the professional school nurse should include licensure as a registered nurse and a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university.⁶ In addition, there should be a process by which certification or licensure for the school nurse is established by the appropriate state board. The AAP recommends the use of appropriately educated and selected school nurses to facilitate and provide school health services. In its *Healthy People 2010* objectives,⁷ the US Department of Health and Human Services recommends at least 1 nurse per 750 students, with variation depending on the community and the student population.

CONCLUSION

The AAP recommends and supports the continued strong partnership among school nurses, other

school health personnel, and pediatricians. These partners should work together closely to promote the health of children and youth by facilitating the development of a comprehensive school health program, ensuring a medical home for each child,⁸ and integrating health, education, and social services for children at the community level.

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